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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION: ADVISORY BOARD ON DISARMAMENT MATTERS

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General reports annually to the General Assembly on the work of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters as requested by the Assembly in its resolution 38/183 O of 20 December 1983. A report on the 1994 sessions of the Board follows.

2. The Board held two meetings in 1994, the first at Geneva on 12 and 13 January and the second in New York from 5 to 8 July. The first was called at my initiative and the second was the planned substantive session for the year. Both meetings were chaired by Ambassador Marcos Castrioto de Azambuja. The membership of the Board is shown in the annex to the present report.

3. At the meeting at Geneva, I spent the first day with the Board and it worked on its own on the second. In my opening statement I laid out possible approaches to be taken in the light of recent events and offered my views on a number of specific tasks that I believe the international community should now carry out with a sense of urgency. (The full text of my remarks was issued as a press release on 12 January 1994 and, together with my message to the Conference on Disarmament on 25 January 1994, published under the title "The Disarmament Agenda of the International Community in 1994 and Beyond".)

4. My purpose in calling the meeting at Geneva was to follow up on my earlier reports, entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/C.1/47/7) and "New Dimensions of Arms Regulation and Disarmament in the Post Cold-War Era" (A/47/277), and to ask the questions: (a) what are the key issues?; (b) what should be the disarmament agenda of the world community in 1994 and beyond?; and (c) what new concepts,

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* A/49/150.

new approaches, can be used to integrate, globalize and reinvigorate the debate about disarmament?

5. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman reported to me that the Board had identified a number of key issues that should be on the agenda and a number of approaches that could be taken by myself, and members of the Board, to advance that agenda. The Board also reflected on its own methods of work and how it could play a more proactive role in assisting me in developing policy in the area of arms limitation and disarmament.

6. With respect to the agenda, the Board cited the need for the world community to develop procedures allowing equitable and responsible access to new technologies, including, in particular, dual purpose technologies with possible military application. Further, it noted the importance of the Register of Conventional Arms and the need to foster its development, while at the same time assessing the growing problem of the proliferation of illicit small arms throughout the world. In the nuclear area the Board identified the successful completion of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty as one of the issues meriting close attention.

7. The Board also provided positive comments on how it could improve its own methods of work and, as stated above, be of more assistance in developing policy. It identified the need to update, in an appropriate manner, the arms control agenda as currently spelled out in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly (resolution S-10/2). On all of these issues the Board signified its intention to work inter-sessionally to build on its ideas and to present the results at the substantive session in the summer.

8. In its capacity as the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the Board, at its Geneva session, received an interim report from the Director and approved the thrust of the Institute's research programme. In particular, it noted a major study on conflict management processes which addresses many of the problems facing the Organization today.

9. During the inter-sessional period, the Board did an impressive amount of work on the identified agenda. When I met with the Board on 8 July I was informed of progress made since our meeting at Geneva. At the same time, I gave my views to the Board on certain of the ideas suggested to me by the Chairman earlier in a letter. In particular I stressed my requirement for clear, practical and realistic advice as to how the United Nations should discharge its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations in the area of arms limitation and disarmament.

10. The Board was very helpful in assisting my thinking in two areas in particular, those relating to the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty now being conducted at Geneva under the auspices of the Conference on Disarmament and the question of equitable and responsible access to new technologies. As has been the practice in the past, specific recommendations in both areas have been forwarded to me by the Chairman in a private communication.

11. As regards the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty, the Board presented me with a range of views which, as I have mentioned, I found helpful in formulating my own thinking on this very important matter. I took note, in particular, of the introductory remarks of Ambassador François de La Gorce, Mr. Ednan T. Agaev and Mr. Sha Zukang, which helped to focus our discussion. I will keep myself abreast of developments and, as required, play whatever role might be seen by the international community as being helpful.

12. On the question of access to new technologies we exchanged views on how to achieve a balance between security concerns on the one hand and development opportunities on the other. Again, I was grateful for the introductory remarks by Ambassador Peggy Mason and the Director of UNIDIR, Mr. Sverre Lodgaard, who brought their recent experience in this area to my attention and that of the members of the Board. The Board provided some useful ideas for my report to the General Assembly on scientific and technological developments and their impact on international security and I have taken them under advisement. In addition to specific recommendations that might be actioned by myself, other organs of the United Nations and related bodies, the Board suggested a more coordinated effort to involve private industry in the discussions. The identification of the best forums in which to advance the issue was also seen as an issue in itself.

13. In addition, the Board provided valuable advice on the status of the Register of Conventional Arms and ways in which the whole concept of the Register could be improved. I will be reviewing our discussion on how to increase participation in the current Register and, in particular, how to improve communication with Member States. The Centre for Disarmament Affairs intends to continue its programme of regional workshops on the Register, a course of action which reflects my own ideas on stimulating better understanding of this important confidence-building measure. We had a good discussion on the relevance to many Member States of the Register in its current form and how regional complimentary variants might reinforce the global system. It appears that a regional specific approach may be the answer to local concerns, as well as being a vehicle for promoting adherence to the global register.

14. I was very interested in the Board's assessment of its own role and how it saw its methods of work evolving. Professor John Simpson had provided a paper for the members which guided their thinking. I remain convinced that the Board is a valuable tool that can assist me in my activities in the area of disarmament, an area encompassing a much wider scope than we have traditionally understood the term, e.g., its relationship to the broader area of peace operations, in particular preventive diplomacy. The Board felt that its current mandate from the General Assembly was basically sound and offered sufficient flexibility. The Board will not rely entirely on requests for advice by me but will be proactive in making suggestions and bringing issues to my attention. It will continue to act as a sounding board for my ideas, as well as interacting with the Governments and publics of its members.

15. In our exchange of views I made the point that the Organization has a major communication problem. This problem not only applies to the efforts of the United Nations in the field of disarmament but permeates all facets of its work. I urged the members, in their personal capacities, to work to alleviate this

problem and to ensure that the successes of the United Nations in whatever field are "trumpeted" in an effort to offset the situation where failure is more often in the headlines than our very significant accomplishments.

16. I welcome the intention of members of the Board to work inter-sessionally in subgroups, according to their own interests and expertise, in order to advance our common agenda between formal sessions. I am in full agreement, given the importance of their work, that the Board should return to the practice of two full meetings per year. Finally, I welcome the intent of the Board to open its sessions, as appropriate, to presentations by experts in fields related to the work of the Board and to increased communication with the relevant non-governmental organizations.

17. Although this is not a function of the Board per se, members recognized that they as individuals represented a potential pool of talent that I might call on to represent me in advisory, technical and fact-finding missions within their personal areas of competence. I shall certainly bear this in mind.

18. As part of the mandatory business of the Board, members were briefed on the activities of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, especially activities undertaken as part of the disarmament information programme. Members were updated on the work of the Centre regarding periodic and special publications in the area of arms limitation and disarmament. Members of the Board will make every effort to contribute articles and essays to the various publications of the Centre, in the spirit of their intention to contribute to inter-sessional work of the Board. Briefings also included reports on studies completed since the last meeting (confidence-building measures in outer space) and ongoing (verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations) and the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Register of Conventional Arms, which has been conducting a review of the Register after two years of operation.

19. The activities of the regional centres for disarmament were also described. Recalling their concerns expressed in my previous report on the work of the Board (A/48/325), the members strongly recommended that the General Assembly fund the work of the centres at the rate of $50,000 each annually.

20. Following its earlier discussion with me on the Register of Conventional Arms the Board returned to the issue later. The Board affirmed that education on the purposes of the Register was the key to promoting wider participation in the exercise. The report of the Group of Governmental Experts is the most in-depth report on this issue. Nevertheless I have taken note of the different views within the Board with respect to making changes to the current mechanism, both to make it more regionally relevant and to add holdings and national production to the system. I am particularly pleased to note the suggestion by the Chairman that individual members of the Board take on educational and promotion tasks in their own regions. Africa was identified by a number of members as an area particularly in need of a regional variant as a major confidence-building measure. The discussion on this issue was facilitated by papers prepared by Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki and Mr. Sha Zukang, members of the Board who are also members of the Group of Governmental Experts.

21. Recalling our discussions at Geneva, the members returned to the topic of the proliferation of illicit small arms. They noted the developments in the Disarmament Commission as well as the preparations for my advisory mission to Mali. With respect to the latter, I have, at the request of the President, tasked the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, in cooperation with other elements of the Secretariat and external experts, to determine the scope of the proliferation of illicit small arms there and to make recommendations on what advice the United Nations might offer the Government of Mali as regards their collection and destruction. The Board has identified this issue of the proliferation of illicit small arms as one to keep on its agenda and I look forward to its advice, which I will consider along with developments in the Disarmament Commission and in the field. The leader of my mission to Mali (Mr. Eteki-Mboumoua (Cameroon)) is a former member of the Board and his deputy will be Brigadier-General Henny J. van der Graaf (Netherlands), a current member.

22. I have already mentioned the Board's identification of the possible need to review the current situation with regard to the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly. After considering papers by Ambassadors Rogelio Pfirter and Mitsuro Donowaki, Mr. Martin C. Ayafor and Professor John Simpson, the Board decided that the document had its own place in history and that the document per se should stand. It recognized, nevertheless, that there was a requirement for updated guidelines in the field of arms limitation and disarmament but that this was a major undertaking beyond the resources and mandate of the Board. In that light the Board took note of the suggestion at the recent meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that a special session on disarmament be convened by the General Assembly. The Board suggested that it produce a short "think piece" for me as a possible future contribution to the debate. I look forward to receiving such a paper.

23. The Advisory Board ended its session with consideration of its future work programme and discussion of its report to me. In terms of its programme, the Board had a good discussion on possible issues it might address. The final decision will be a joint one arrived at by the Chairman and myself. The Board will deal with both short- and long-term issues while keeping its overall agenda at a manageable level. Within the overall agenda I will identify those priority items I believe should be discussed with me personally.

24. The agenda will continue to cover matters related both to weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and to conventional weapons. The Board's activities in the nuclear area will be influenced, in part, by the run-up to the Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995. In the conventional area there will be an increasing interest in the practical aspects of arms limitation and disarmament in the context of peace operations. This will automatically mean more attention being paid to regional issues. Concurrently, the Board will be looking ahead to try and determine the nature of disarmament and arms limitation at the end of the century and beyond.

25. In its capacity as the Board of Trustees of UNIDIR the Board devoted two meetings during the July session to a review of the activities of the Institute

for the period July 1993-June 1994, and, confirmed the work programme for the period 1994/95. Among other points made by the Board of Trustees was the decision to recommend strongly the continuing subvention of $220,000 for the current biennium. In addition, the Board considered that, in the light of the increasing relevance of the UNIDIR programme, and notwithstanding increases in voluntary contributions, the subvention be increased to $400,000 with effect from the biennium 1996-1997. As I have indicated in earlier reports, the Board expressed the view that this annual subvention from the regular budget of the United Nations would continue to be needed in the future in order to assure the independence and financial viability of the Institute.

26. As an integral part of the UNIDIR meetings, the Director of the Institute offered a presentation by Mr. Herbert York, a former Director of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in the United States of America and President Jimmy Carter's chief test-ban negotiator. As I noted above, invitations to experts, under UNIDIR auspices, will become a feature of Board meetings.

27. A full account of the Board's deliberations as the Board of Trustees of the Institute is contained in document A/49/329.

ANNEX

Members of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Mr. Ednan T. AGAEV
Ambassador
Directorate of Analysis and Forecasting
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
Moscow

Professor A. Bolaji AKINYEMI
Akinyemi and Associates
Lagos

Mr. Martin Chungong AYAFOR
Minister
Director, Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Cameroon
Yaounde

Mr. Marcos Castrioto de AZAMBUJA
Ambassador
Embassy of Brazil to Argentina
Buenos Aires

Mr. Mitsuro DONOWAKI
Ambassador
Embassy of Japan to Mexico
Mexico City

Professor Muchkund DUBEY
Former Foreign Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India
New Delhi

Lieutenant General (Ret.) Emmanuel A. ERSKINE
Accra

Dr. Curt GASTEYGER
Professor, The Graduate Institute of International Studies
Director, Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies
Geneva, Switzerland

Brigadier General (Ret.) Henny J. van der GRAAF
Director, Centre for Arms Control and Verification Technology
Eindhoven University of Technology
Eindhoven, Netherlands

Dr. Josef HOLIK
Ambassador
Commissioner for Disarmament and Arms Control of the
Federal Government of Germany
Bonn, Germany

Mr. François de LA GORCE
Ambassador
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France
Paris

Mr. James F. LEONARD
Ambassador
Executive Director
Washington Council on Non-Proliferation
Washington, D.C., United States of America

Ms. Peggy MASON
Ambassador for Disarmament
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of Canada
Ottawa

Mr. Rogelio PFIRTER
Ambassador
Under-Secretary for Foreign Policy
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina
Buenos Aires

Mr. SHA Zukang
Deputy Director-General
Department of International Organizations and Conferences
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China
Beijing

Mr. Mohamed I. SHAKER
Ambassador
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Northern Ireland
London

Professor John SIMPSON
Director, Mountbatten Centre for International Studies
Department of Politics
University of Southampton
Southampton, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Ms. SITTI AZIZAH Abod
Under-Secretary
Policy Division
Ministry of Defence of Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur

Dr. J. Soedjati DJIWANDONO
Senior Researcher
Centre for Strategic and International Studies of Indonesia
Jakarta

Mr. Klaus TORNUDD
Ambassador
Embassy of Finland to France
Paris

Mr. Sverre LODGAARD a/
Director, UNIDIR

Notes

a/ Ex officio member.